

the excitement of the present; and he might therefore be excused if he recalled to their minds the fact that Manchester was by no means a new or upstart town; on the contrary, that it was one of the oldest towns in the British empire. It was a town in the time of the British; it was a Roman castra, which gave it its name of "chester," and was a title of proud distinction, and from that time to the present it had gone on steadily increasing in importance until it had become the wonder we now saw it. He would not dwell upon the period before the Norman conquest, because very much of the matter referring thereto must be merely conjectural; he would rather, at once, take up the first record we find on ecclesiastical matters in Manchester. This was done in Doomsday Book, which mentioned two churches, St. Mary's and St. Michael's, which were endowed with a carucate of land, free from the payment of taxes to the king or any one else, except the Danegeld.

Dr. Whitaker had entered at very great length, and with an extraordinary degree of acuteness and discrimination, into the question of the situation of these churches; and his opinion (which had been uncontroverted) was that St. Mary's was situated in the Castle Acre or Field, near what is now St. Mary's Gate, and that St. Michael's was in Alport. The town originally clustered around the Roman camp, but in the wars with the Danes it was frequently plundered. When the Conqueror came into England, he granted the land between Ribbles and Mersey to Roger de Ponton; and the first record relative to the church after that was in 1150, when the then baron of Manchester, Albert Grealey, granted the church four bovates or ox-gangs of land. Opinion was divided as to whether an ox-gang was 10 or 25 acres. From this period the materials again became very scanty, but about 1192, in some charters of the Bishops of Lichfield and Coventry, we find the clergy of Manchester mentioned under the name of "deane." A few scattered notices were all that could be again found up to the year 1421. In 1313, La Warre was created Baron of Manchester, and about that time he built what was then known by the name of "The Baron's Hull," which stood between the confluence of the Irk and the Irwell, upon the spot where the Chetham College now stands. A few years afterwards there was a survey of the barony of Manchester, and a return made in 1333 states that "the church of Manchester, worth 200 marks, is at the lord's presentation, to which the Lord John de la Warr now last presented John Cuerden, who having been instituted in the same, possesses the endowment, consisting of eight burgages in Manchester, and the towns of Newtown, and Kermonsholme, with the meadows, pastures, and other appurtenances."

Mr. Ashpitel referred to the number of Flemings who settled in England at this period, bringing with them their knowledge of manufactures and commerce; and to the marked progress which was being made towards a knowledge of science. He also referred to the breaking down of the monastic system, the introduction of "secular canons," and the founding of religious houses of the order of St. Augustine. From some cause, which was not clear, the church of Manchester was converted into a college of canons. The story told by Fuller to account for this was not corroborated by any other writer; and the charter granted by Henry V. mentioned nothing of the kind. As the charters relating to this conversion had been carefully preserved and translated and printed, he need not dwell upon them. The property was surrendered to the Bishop of Durham, in trust, to appoint a proper warden and make the necessary arrangements. He first appointed Huntingdon. Hollingworth, in his "Mancunians," said, that Huntingdon "built the chancel and the choir, in the midst of which, before the altar, he lies buried with a suitable inscription." Hollingworth then mentioned that Huntingdon's rebus existed in the roof of the choir. His successor remained but a short time, as, having incurred the displeasure of Edward IV., he was fined and removed. The next warden was Langley, who was succeeded by one of the Stanleys, who gave up his place in a short time to James Stanley, the celebrated Bishop of Ely.

In the late Dr. Hibbert-Ware's excellent

work, there was a portion of an architectural history, written by a townsman, Mr. Palmer, who said that Huntingdon built the choir and the north and south aisles; but that this choir went up only to the height of the present arches, and did not include the upper windows or clerestory; also that he built portions of the chapter-house and the short aisle near the Derby chapel; in fact, that he commenced a church which was, evidently intended to be transeptal. But further on Mr. Palmer stated what appeared to him (Mr. Ashpitel), as being very extraordinary, namely, that Warden Stanley (1484-1509) pulled down all Huntingdon's work, and built what we now saw. But being puzzled by finding Huntingdon's plan (a man hunting and a tun) in the roof, Mr. Palmer supposed that Stanley took the old roof off, laid it on one side, and then put it on the new building. In his examination of the building, he (Mr. Ashpitel) was extremely struck by finding under the tower a doorway that must be about 100 years older than the time of the first warden. He had made a section of the moulding of this doorway, and compared it with another which Mr. Paley gave as positively of the date of 1330. He (Mr. Ashpitel) then passed to the extreme east end of the church, and there, at the Lady Chapel, he found the piers of the arch also of a positive decorated character. From the peculiar form of the shafts of the piers and their fillets, they decidedly belonged to the period from 1330 to 1350, sixty or seventy years before Huntingdon was elected, or the church was made a collegiate church.

It would be important for them to consider what stood upon the site before Huntingdon's church. Here he found a very curious thing indeed, and one from which, if he did not err, he thought he might bring forward a point of considerable interest. We were told by Hollingworth, and also "by the additional MS." No. 5,836, in the British Museum (which had never before been quoted upon the subject, but which confirmed Hollingworth in this and other points), that a large wooden church stood there, which Hollingworth said was a species of large booth, similar to that in which the court-leet and court-baron were held, although it was probably much more ornate. Upon inquiry, he (Mr. Ashpitel) was told that a portion of this wooden church was to be found in a barn at Ordsal, and another portion in what was now a barn at Stand. Stand Hall belonged to the Stanleys, and was actually built about the time that Stanley was warden, and about the time when we might suppose the old wooden church to be removed. He went to Ordsal, and was there told that there had always been at that place a tradition that part of the old wooden church was there; "and," said his informant, "here are some of the timbers of it." [Mr. Ashpitel referred to a drawing of a portion of this barn, which, he said, belonged to a building evidently possessing the character of a nave and aisles, and which had been built upon the very best plan for constructing churches where stone was not used.] But upon proceeding to Stand, he found quite a different thing. Here the timbers shown to him resembled much more what might be supposed to have been part of a chancel. It had precisely the character of the roof of buildings known to have been erected in 1350; and there was reason to believe that the old wooden church was built in 1351. If it really were the case, that they then had under consideration part of the old wooden church of Manchester, it could not fail to be interesting to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, as well as to antiquaries and architects, as showing what the ancient wooden church was.

It had been considered that the only wooden church now remaining was that at Greensted, in Essex; but Mr. Charles Bailey had made some researches in Worcestershire, and had made a sketch (referred to) of the church of Beauford, which was wooden, and which still existed. This church had a positive square-headed decorated window at the east end, and it served to enlighten us as to the mode in which our ancestors built those churches of which so much had been heard and so little is really known. In the church at Stand he found there was a window of a precisely similar character, only that it had four lights instead of two. He thought there was irrefragable proof that something of a stone building was

commenced long before the wardenship of Huntingdon, and that contrary to the authority of all that had been written upon the subject. This, however, tended in reality rather to fill up a gap, than to contradict what had been written. He had no doubt that the whole of the lower part of the present tower, up to the height of perhaps half the great west window, was of a period at least sixty or eighty years before Huntingdon's time. This part was decidedly of the decorated period, but above the height to which he had referred, work of a later period would be plainly observed—the stones were larger, and the tooth of time had not gnawed them so much as in the lower part. There was one curious circumstance, that the choir of the church was not exactly in the middle. The range of columns on one side were in a line with those of the nave, while on the other side they were drawn in considerably more. It was probable that the tower was commenced at the same time as the Lady Chapel. This kind of chapel was of a late introduction, there being nothing of the kind in any early Norman building. His impression was that these portions were commenced and were going on when Warden Huntingdon was elected. Mr. Palmer thought that the arch in the Lady Chapel had been altered by Stanley; but unfortunately for this theory, another rebus of Huntingdon was found in the arch. He (Mr. Ashpitel) held that Huntingdon built the whole of the choir and aisles; and it was more than probable that his intention was to have added two transepts; for there were two walls built, against which there was a moulding, now inside the church, of a character which, in ordinary circumstances, we never found except on the outside.

Mr. Palmer said that Langley (Huntingdon's successor) was recorded to have expended 28l. 13s. 4d. on that part of the church between the pulpit and the people; and that although the record was very ambiguous, it might be inferred that it was on the church of Manchester that he made that expenditure. The British Museum Manuscript, however, said nothing of the kind; but it did say that Langley gave to the church bells and chiming. Old Dr. Cole had written in the margin, "This cannot be correct, as chiming was not known in England at the time;" but it was certain that, within a few years of that date the chiming of Evesham were put up by the abbot of that place, so that it was not improbable that the old manuscript was right; and if this were the case, Manchester might claim to have possessed the first regular set of chiming in the country. Mr. Palmer said that Langley's 28l. 13s. 4d. was equivalent to 400l. of our money, which he (Mr. Ashpitel) thought was rather over-stating the point; but, even if it were equivalent to 400l., that sum would go but a very little way towards building so large a nave. He thought, therefore, that Langley only commenced the nave, and that it was finished by the powerful Stanley, who succeeded him.

There was another reason for this. Both Hollingworth and the old manuscript said that Stanley built for himself and his relatives the chancel chapel, now called Derby or Stanley Chapel; and there was some difference in the architecture there and in the nave. The history of the building to this point might be best elucidated by supposing that the work of Huntingdon was carried on by Langley as far as he could do it—perhaps about half-way; that it was completed by Stanley, who then built his own chapel and the beautiful little chapter-house. Stanley's example seemed to have created a feeling in Manchester, for which he (Mr. Ashpitel) knew no parallel anywhere else. Before the Derby Chapel could have been completed, the Jesus Chapel was built by Bexwith, a merchant of Manchester, in 1506; the Trafford Chapel next to it was, according to Hollingworth, built in the same year; the St. George's Chapel was built by Galley in 1508, and the Strangeways Chapel in the same year; the Oldham Chapel was built before 1510, and the Bibby Porch very soon after.

The incrustation of the church, with all these chantries, gave it the most picturesque effect that could be imagined. There was nothing like it that he knew of in England—it having five spires—except at Chichester, and a portion of St. Michael's Church at Coventry. It reminded one of the mosques at Cordova